

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5314
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION USNATO
USNMR SHAPE
USDOCOSOUTH
USCINCEUR
CINCUSAFE

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BRUSSELS FOR USEEC

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR PARA THREE

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, US, GR, TU

SUBJ: REACTION TO DECISION TO LIFT THE EMBARGOREF: ATHENS 2775

1. DEVELOPMENTS CONNECTED WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT
THE ADMINISTRATION INTENDS TO ASK CONGRESS TO REMOVE THE
ARMS EMBARGO AGAINST TURKEY REMAINS THE LEAD NEWS STORY
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IN THE GREEK MEDIA APRIL 5. PROMINENT IN THE REPORTING
WAS PRINCIPAL OPPOSITION LEADER PAPANDREOU'S DEMAND THAT
PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS ISSUE A STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT,
AND THAT CARAMANLIS AND FOREIGN MINISTER PAPALIGOURAS HAD
DECLINED TO MAKE ANY COMMENT REGARDING THE USG DECISION
WHEN ASKED TO DO SO IN LUXEMBOURG. CARAMANLIS SAID IT
WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE TO COMMENT ON THE SUBJECT WHILE

IN A THIRD COUNTRY. MANY ACCOUNTS SAID THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD RETURN TO ATHENS APRIL 6, A DAY EARLIER THAN PLANNED, AND SPECULATED HE MIGHT MAKE A PUBLIC STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT SOON THEREAFTER.

2. CARAMANLIS' SILENCE PROVOKED PRINCIPAL OPPOSITION LEADER ANDREAS PAPANDREOU (PASOK) TO MAKE A SECOND OUTCRY WHICH RECEIVED WIDE ATTENTION. PAPANDREOU SJXVBXPECTED A REACTION FROM THE PRIME MINISTER SINCE THE LATTER HAD THE OBLIGATION TO EXPRESS THE ANGER AND INDIGNATION OF THE GREEK NATION OVER THIS CYNICAL ANTI-GREEK STAND OF THE USG. SHOULD CARAMANLIS REMAIN SILENT, HE SAID, "HE WILL FORCE US TO CONCLUDE THAT HE HAS ACCEPTED THE OBLIGATION TO REMAIN SILENT -- ALWAYS ON THE ALTAR OF 'WE BELONG TO THE WEST'", A POLICY, CONTENDED PAPANDREOU, WHICH HAS FAILED AND MUST BE CHANGED TO SAFEGUARD GREECE'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND INDEPENDENCE.

3. THE TURKISH PRIME MINISTER'S LATEST COMMENTS ON THE LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO AND THE EFFECT IT WILL HAVE ON TURKEY'S NEGOTIATING POSITION CONCERNING THE CYPRUS QUESTION ALSO RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE PLAY HERE. COVERAGE WAS LIKEWISE GIVEN TO A RELEASE BY VISITING GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHBISHOP OF NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA IAKOVOS WHO CONDEMNED THE ADMINISTRATION'S DECISION. IAKOVOS SAID UNCLASSIFIED

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HE HAS BEGUN TO MOBILIZE GREEK-AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR CONGRESS TO DEFEAT THE LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO. ALL MORNING NEWSPAPERS REPORTED THE DEPARTMENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING THE EMBARGO, AND MOST NOTED GREEK AMBASSADOR ALEXANDRAKIS HAD BEEN TO THE DEPARTMENT -- SOME CLAIMING TO PROTEST THE DECISION, OTHERS SAYING HE SOUGHT CLARIFICATIONS. THE CONTINUING REACTION IN NICOSIA ALSO WAS INCLUDED IN SOME ACCOUNTS, AS WERE STATEMENTS BY CONGRESSMAN BIAGGI WHO PREDICTED DEFEAT OF THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSAL IN THE CONGRESS AND BY CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ WHO WAS REPORTED AS SAYING IN ANKARA THAT IT WOULD BE PASSED. GREEK TV ALSO REPORTED THAT CONGRESSMAN BRADEMAS HAD ALSO PREDICTED DEFEAT OF THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSAL.

4. JOINING IN THE ATTACK ON CARAMANLIS WAS THE LEADER IN PARLIAMENT OF THE RIGHTIST NATIONAL CAMP, SPYROS THEOTOKIS, WHO CRITICIZED THE U.S. FOR ITS ALLEGED FAVORITISM TOWARDS TURKEY AND ACCUSED THE PRIME MINISTER OF HAVING ISOLATED GREECE BY PURSUING A "PERSONAL" FOREIGN POLICY. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE MAJORITY NEW DEMOCRACY PARTY, ALL PARTIES AND POLITICAL

GROUPS HAVE NOW COME OUT STRONGLY AGAINST THE LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO. THE PRESS ALSO REPORTED THAT A RALLY WOULD TAKE PLACE THE EVENING OF APRIL 5 AT ATHENS UNIVERSITY ORGANIZED BY THE CYPRIOT STUDENTS IN GREECE AND SUPPORTED BY OTHER UNIVERSITY STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS. THE STUDENTS HAD ANNOUNCED THEIR INTENTION TO MARCH ON THE EMBASSY, BUT THE AUTHORITIES HAVE INDICATED THEY WILL NOT ALLOW IT.

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5. MORE SPECIFICALLY, IN THE MORNING PRESS, OPPOSITION TO VIMA HEADLINED "GOVERNMENT HOPES TO SWEETEN THE PILL - ECIVIT PROMISES 'REASONABLE' PROPOSALS AFTER THE LIFTING OF THE 'EMBARGO'". IT WROTE THAT AVEROFF'S RESTRAINED REACTION TO THE NEWS OF THE LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO WAS DUE TO THE GOG'S EXPECTATION THAT THE U.S. WOULD MAKE A GESTURE TO SOFTEN THE BLOW. TO VIMA ALSO SUGGESTED THAT BECAUSE THE TURKISH DCA WOULD BE REVISED, IT WAS LOGICAL TO SURMISE THE CORRESPONDING

GREEK DCA WOULD BE REVIEWED ACCORDINGLY. FROM NEW YORK, CORRESPONDENT EFSTATHIADIS REPORTED THERE WOULD BE A DONEYBROOK IN CONGRESS OVER THE ATTEMPT TO LIFT UNCLASSIFIED

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THE EMBARGO. PRO-GOVERNMENT AKROPOLIS CLAIMED THAT ECEVIT'S REMARKS WERE MORE "IMPERTINENT" THAN EVER BECAUSE THE TURKISH PRIME MINISTER NOW ACCUSED THE GREEK CYPRIOTS OF BEING INTRANSIGENT.

6. GOVERNMENT-SUPPORTING KATHIMERINI SPOKE OF GREEK AMBASSADOR ALEXANDRAKIS GOING TO THE DEPARTMENT TO SEEK CLARIFICATIONS CONCERNING THE LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO AND STATED THAT WASHINGTON WAS TRYING TO BALANCE THE UNFAVORABLE REACTIONS TO THE LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO BY HINTING THAT IT HAD ACHIEVED THE SIMULTANEOUS SUBMISSION OF TURKISH PROPOSALS ON CYPRUS. INFLUENTIAL COLUMNIST GEORGE DROSSOS CLAIMED IN KATHIMERINI THE U.S. RECOGNIZED TURKEY WAS NOT A TRUE FRIEND, BUT HAD ACTED OUT OF NECESSITY AND SELF-INTEREST IN DECIDING TO LIFT THE EMBARGO. IN DOING SO, HE STATED, THE U.S. HAD DISCARDED IDEALISM FROM ITS FOREIGN POLICY. A KATHIMERINI EDITORIAL CLAIMED THAT IT WAS IN THE INTERESTS OF FOREIGN POWERS CONCERNED WITH THE MIDDLE EAST TO HAVE TURKEY MILITARILY STRONG, AND FOR THIS REASON THE ADMINISTRATION WAS TRYING TO DUPE CONGRESS INTO LIFTING THE EMBARGO.

7. THE ORTHODOX COMMUNIST RIZOSPASTIS ARGUED THAT THE U.S. WAS LIFTING THE EMBARGO TO STIMULATE AN ARMS RACE IN THE AREA AND TENSION IN THE AEGEAN SO THAT BOTH GREECE AND TURKEY WOULD BE PRESSURED INTO RETURNING TO NATO. THE DISSIDENT COMMUNIST AVGHI CHARGED THAT ECEVIT'S RECENT REMARKS INDICATED HE WAS TAKING A MORE HARDLINE APPROACH AND WAS INCREASING TURKEY'S DEMANDS ON CYPRUS AND THE AEGEAN. EDITORIALY AVGHI CONTINUED TO BE CRITICAL OF THE MODERATION SHOWN BY THE GOG, URGING THAT INSTEAD GREECE SHOULD UNCLASSIFIED

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ADOPT A TRULY INDEPENDENT, NATIONAL PLOICY.

8. THE AFTERNOON PRESS GAVE GREATER EMPHASIS TO WHAT IT CALLED THE UPCOMING "STRUGGLE" IN THE CONGRESS OVER THE EMBARGO ISSUE. LEFTIST ELEFTHEROTYPIA PROCLAIMED "CARTER WILL LOSE THE FIGHT, DECLARES THE LOBBY" AND

IN AN ACCOUNT FROM WASHINGTON STRESSED THAT THE GREEK-AMERICAN LOBBY IS PRIMED TO USE EVERY EFFORT TO DEFEAT THE ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORTS. PRO-GOVERNMENT APOYEVMATINI AND VRADYNI ALSO HIGHLIGHTED THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION WOULD HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF DIFFICULTY IN THE CONGRESS BECAUSE OF THE OPPOSITION OF THE GREEK-AMERICAN LOBBY. VRADYNI FURTHER STRESSED THAT THE GREEK GOVERNMENT HAD MADE TWIN DEMARCHES IN WASHINGTON AND ATHENS, REFERRING TO AMBASSADOR ALEXANDRAKI'S CONTACT WITH THE DEPARTMENT AND A VISIT YESTERDAY BY AMBASSADOR MCCLOSKEY TO THE GREEK MFA (WHICH, IN FACT, WAS TO PAY COURTESY CALLS ON VARIOUS GREEK OFFICIALS). LEFTIST TA NEA REFERRED TO ECEVIT'S RECENT STATEMENTS ON CYPRIS AND CLAIMED THAT HE WAS TRYING TO MAKE THE LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO MORE PALATABLE BY APPEARING TO BE MORE FLEXIBLE CONCERNING A CYPRUS SETTLEMENT. FINALLY, ULTRA CONSERVATIVE ESTIA ATTACKED THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED RADIO AND TELEVISION FOR ESSENTIALLY IGNORING THE CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING THE LIFTING OF THE TURKISH EMBARGO.
MCCLOSKEY

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